

Maiden Victory for MacDonald

Another terrific event for the Junior 1000 Ecosse Challenge at the Memorial Garden Stages, Arbroath run by Glenrothes Motorsport Club on Sat 15/4. The day was topped off with Jude MacDonald taking his maiden rally victory in his Skoda Citigo. We have seen some close competition in the Junior 1000 Ecosse Challenge since it started in 2012 but this event must come close to being top of the list.

9 Junior crews started the Junior section of the rally. They were led away in glorious sunshine and a bitterly cold wind sweeping in from the North Sea over the disused Condor airbase by Finlay Retson and Andrew Falconer in the "borrowed" Winder Micra that had done so well on the previous round at Ingliston. But it was obvious watching from the end of the first stage that the conditions were not good for Micras with Retson crossing the line 2 seconds in front of Ewan Tindall/Paul Hudson (Citroen C1). Retson eventually finished in 5th place. And then the number 3 car of Jude MacDonald/Steven Brown crossed the line of the first stage 4 seconds up on Tindall and that set the pattern for the day. Tindall did pull back 1 second (over 8+ miles) on ss2, and on ss3 Tindall tied for first place by taking 3 seconds off MacDonald. Advantage swung back to MacDonald on ss4 when he took 8 seconds back from Tindall. But it wasn't all over - Tindall stopped the clocks 9 seconds quicker than MacDonald on ss5 and took a 1 second lead into the final stage. MacDonald threw caution to the wind over that last stage and took 4 seconds from Tindall to take his maiden Junior 1000 (and rally) victory. I think what he said to me was "I am knackered!!!" But 3 seconds (and maybe the odd spin on the part of both drivers) after 50 or so really testing miles tells us just how good these young guys are.

The rest of the pack couldn't really get on the same wavelength as MacDonald and Tindall but there was a great battle going on for 3rd place. After 2 stages, Johnnie Mackay/Gordon Reid (Suzuki Alto) were tied with Lewis Haining/George Myatt (Toyota Aygo) The Haining Aygo came across the finish line of ss1 minus most of the front end ("We got on top of some tyres and pulled it off reversing!!) And then Mackay brought the Suzuki across the line on ss2 with some "cosmetic surgery" to the front end but it was all still attached to the car (stronger cable ties maybe??) The same story was repeated on ss3 and 4 but this time Haining came out on top to take a 4 second lead over Mackay. Mackay kept his cool and got 4 seconds back on ss5. They went into the last stage tied!! But Mackay got round 7 seconds quicker than Haining to take the final podium place.

Andrew Blackwood/Gordon Winning (Citroen C1) and Amy Mccubbin/Brian Mcclelland (Micra) came home 6th and 7th having pretty much settled into their own rallies. This should be the last outing for Mccubbin in the Micra – a new car is being prepared for the next event.

Alice Paterson/Ian Crosbie (Pug 107) finished 8th but it was a miracle that they finished at all. The car was smoking a bit from the start but by ss5 it was "smoking a lot" and popping and banging. But Paterson stuck with it and nursed the sick car round the final 2 stages. A new engine awaits!!

The only non finisher was Peter Beaton with "uber- veteran driver/co-driver" Tom Hynd sitting with him. But an argument with some tyres on ss2 and a collapsed engine mount on ss4 finished their day.

But what a day. The venue threw several different things at the young drivers - long, long stages and varying track conditions - and varying from stage to stage. But the mood was upbeat all day.

The next outing for the Junior drivers will be at Kames, Muirkirk on 7th May.



MacDonald/Brown – FIRST



Tindall/Hudson – SECOND



Mackay/Reid – THIRD

